

VII.—*Further Notes on the Birds of the Pyrenees.*

By HOWARD SAUNDERS.

'THE IBIS' for 1884 (pp. 365-392) contained some account of my ornithological experiences in the western portion of the Pyrenees during the winters and springs of 1882 and 1883, with which were incorporated notes made in the extreme east of that range in the autumn of 1876, as well as a few observations in 1879. Various Members of the B. O. U. have subsequently added to our knowledge, *e. g.* Mr. James Backhouse (Ibis, 1887, pp. 66-74), Mr. W. Eagle Clarke (*op. cit.* 1889, pp. 520-552), and Mr. H. M. Wallis (*op. cit.* 1895, pp. 64-85). The last-named was principally in the central districts, between Eaux-Chaudes and Luchon, as well as on the Aragonese side; while Mr. Clarke, with his companion Mr. Basil Carter, ascended the valley of the Ariège to Ax-les-Thermes, whence they made their way—through Hospitalet, and in spite of new snow—into the little republic of Andorra. Mr. Clarke's was the earliest account of the birds of that district, and only those who have had similar experiences can realize the difficulties to be contended with in the higher mountains in the month of May. At that time the rains have not ceased at the lower elevations on the French side, the old snow is melting in the mountains, and the fresh snow that falls from time to time is soft and impedes locomotion. May is, however, the best month for finding birds breeding, and it seemed possible that, by beginning in the south-east of France, thence passing into Catalonia, and working along the base of the Pyrenees on the Spanish side, drier and more settled weather might be expected than was probable in the central or western regions. Moreover, the country from Luchon eastward as far as the western side of Mount Canigou was unknown to me, and there were several points which required investigation. For instance, it was desirable to learn whether there was any foundation for the late Dr. L. Companyó's statement that the Black Grouse is found in the Eastern Pyrenees, as well as to learn something about the range of the Hazel-Grouse; while,

though interesting birds of prey could hardly be expected to be conspicuous in Catalonia, the most prosperous and populous province of Spain, yet, even there, some marshes and lakes appeared on the map, especially in the sweep of the Gulf of Rosas, and these seemed worthy of investigation, to say nothing of the rocky coast on either side. It was true that a score of years ago I had learned by sad experience that the *étangs* on the French coast between Narbonne and Perpignan were vanity, and Mr. Eagle Clarke's subsequent visit was fruitless, but better things were hoped from Spain. As regarded the weather, the outlook was dubious. The winter had been absolutely open; no snow had fallen, and almost any pass could have been crossed up to the middle of March; but then a heavy storm took place on the French side, and all the "ports" and "cols" were blocked. In Spain, however, no rain had followed, and Aragon was reduced by drought to absolute famine, while processions and prayers were the order of the day, even in free-thinking Catalonia. It seemed unlikely that this state of affairs could last much longer, but the latter part of April came and the news was that the drought continued. My friend Colonel H. W. Feilden had agreed to give me the pleasure of his company, and, as we were obliged to return to England by the middle of June, the 25th of April found us at Toulouse.

At the excellent museum of that city I was pleased to find my former acquaintances, Dr. Eugène Trutat, the Director, and M. Victor Bonheuri. M. Adrien Lacroix still retained his valuable collection of Pyrenean birds; while M. Félix Regnault showed us his grand series of spoils from the caverns—complete skeletons of cave-bear and hyæna, skulls of cave-lion, and, rarest of all, one cranium of a panther, with any number of stone implements. Moreover, the celebrated archæologist M. Cartailhac introduced us to the interior of many ancient *hôtels* and other buildings which we should never have found out from guide-books. Our first excursion was up the valley of the Ariège—passing the old towns of Foix and Tarascon—to Ax-les-Thermes, which Mr. Eagle Clarke has so well described; and thence

we hoped to break new ground by crossing the Col de Marmare to Quillan, in the almost parallel valley of the Aude. The general opinion being that this was impracticable, we returned to Toulouse, never expecting to see Ax again, but *Diis aliter visum*.

Next day we started for Quillan by way of Carcassonne, where we stopped a few hours, and the climb to the picturesque *cité* in almost tropical heat will long be remembered. In the cemetery Nightingales were singing loudly. Serin Finches were uttering their peculiar "frizzling" twitter, and the abundance of large castings at the foot of a cypress indicated the presence of some species of Owl. Ascending the valley of the Aude, where the soil is red, like that of Devon, and quite different from that of the Ariège, we reached the pretty little town of Quillan in a heavy thunderstorm, the swollen clay-coloured river confirming the evidence of the panorama of the Pyrenees on the way from Toulouse, that there had been plenty of recent snow on the French slope.

Quillan itself is not more than 1000 feet above sea-level, but the scenery beyond it, on both sides of the valley, is very fine; the rocks being peculiarly rugged in outline and white in colour, studded with dark-green forest in strong contrast. After heavy rain all night, the weather lifted sufficiently to allow us to take a walk in the hills and obtain some idea of the surroundings; but the Meadow-Bunting and the Crag-Martin were almost the only species which could not have been met with at home, and before noon the rain came down in torrents, with a sharp fall in temperature. Next morning (May 1st) we made an early start in the direction of the Corbières, a wild spur of mountains branching off the main chain to the north of the valley of the Tet, and consequently to the northward of Perpignan: a region almost unknown, except to a few French *alpinistes*. It was on its skirts—in the Forêt des Fanges and some other localities—that Companyó said the Black Grouse was found, and certainly, if anywhere, the Corbières seemed the most likely, owing to their geographical position at no great distance from the

Cevennes. Heavy storms of rain, with biting wind, checked our progress, and we did not get to the forest. Along the river Crag-Martins were numerous; a Sparrow-Hawk dashed across the road and just missed his bird; Grey Wagtails were conspicuous, and the White Wagtail was not uncommon; a pair of Pied Flycatchers were watched; Linnets of the brightest colour swarmed, and the Nightingales sang bravely in defiance of wind and rain. In the course of the day we thrice saw Ravens, evidently taking food to their young in some crags in the defile of the Pierre-Lis. Along this gorge, through a tunnel known as the *Trou du Curé*, after its worthy originator, the Abbé Amand, we penetrated for some miles in the direction of the Baths of Carcanières by a magnificent road, parallel to which the railway is being pushed on. This highly picturesque route has been opened to Mont Louis (about 45 miles) only since 1887, and it was with great regret that we renounced our intention of passing through it, for it traverses the Capcir—the finest forest-district of the Eastern Pyrenees. Our landlord, however, dissuaded us, in spite of his obvious interest being to let his vehicle or horses, and he positively refused to post us beyond Carcanières under the state of the weather, adding that we should probably get no further and would have to return. Considering that Mont Louis is the highest (nearly 5000 feet) and the coldest garrison-town in all France, even in summer, it would have been rash to go on in such weather; but this second check was doubly severe, because Mont Louis is exceptionally well situated, standing, as it does, near the head of the river Tet, which runs down to Perpignan, passing Prades and the Vernet side of Mount Canigou; while, in the opposite direction, Bourg-Madame and Puigcerdá can easily be reached, and the best part of Catalonia becomes accessible. There was, however, nothing for it but to go back to the plains and take the railway.

At Carcassonne, where it had been oppressively hot a few days before, every one was wrapped up and seeking shelter from the *mistral* wind; the great *étangs* of Sijean and Leucate, and even the usually blue Mediterranean, were

nearly white with foam-crests, and a few Gulls, with Red-shanks along the shores, were the only birds visible in the driving clouds of dust. Changing train at Perpignan, we ascended the Tet valley to the pleasant town of Prades, the usual point of departure for Vernet-les-Bains. We merely visited the latter, which was at that time frequented only by "serious" invalids, most of them in a very sad state; the butterfly-visitors, for whom the grand hotels exist, come later. Vernet is somewhat shut in, and although there are good excursions to be made from it, I much prefer Amélie-les-Bains, on the other side of Canigou, where I passed some weeks in the autumn of 1876. In the valley of La Taurinya, by the ruined abbey of Saint-Michel-de-Cuxa, we identified a Tree-Sparrow, a very local species in the south; House-Sparrows were generally distributed, but less numerous than the Chaffinch; the Crested Lark and the Woodlark were met with, Swallows and House-Martins swarmed, a male Cirl Bunting was well seen, and the Meadow-Bunting haunted every bank, not to mention several common species. One of our excursions was to Molitg, where we called upon a M. Massiá, who gave us some information about the natural history of the neighbourhood and pointed out a favourite resort of the Eagle-Owl on a ruined fortress on a crag. He possessed no specimen of the Black Grouse, and had no knowledge of the Hazel-Grouse, though evidently well acquainted with game-birds, and he ought to have been a good sportsman, for he owned two lovely Gordon setters. On the 4th May we saw our first Woodchat-Shrike, but the wind was so furious that few birds desirous of a quiet life would face it.

On May 5th we descended to Perpignan, and passed on to Banyuls-sur-Mer, a little town and port on the frontier, well known by reputation at least, owing to its marine biological station, the *Laboratoire Arago*. There we were cordially received by the Préparateur, M. Adrien Robert; subsequently meeting Mr. Minchin, of Merton College, Oxford, and M. Severtzoff, son of the well-known Russian naturalist. The last had been out all day in pursuit of whales, to one of

which the harpooner had got "fast," but the iron had broken, and, considering the absolute inexperience of all concerned, this was just as well. These whales were called *cachalots*, but, from the description of their "spouts," they were certainly not sperm-whales. In the small collection were a young Razorbill (an uncommon bird in the Mediterranean) and a Black Tern, while a young Lesser Black-backed Gull and the Mediterranean representative of our Manx Shearwater were waiting to be skinned. The two following days were devoted to the exploration of the coast on both sides of the frontier, and some time was wasted over a bird which it was hoped might prove a Lanner Falcon; but Kestrels and a Black Kite were the only birds of prey identified. We got very near to a nest of the Raven containing young birds; Eared Wheatears were abundant on the hill-side, and Pied Flycatchers in the small cork-woods, where we also observed the Marsh-Tit; an occasional Hoopoe flitted past, and the favourite haunt of the Whinchat seemed to be small scrub along the seashore.

Passing on to Figueras, in Spain, no time was lost in setting out for the marshes on the Gulf of Rosas, and also for Cadaqués, about 20 miles off, on a rocky peninsula of the same name. Owing to the drought in Spain, there was somewhat less water than usual, but by the time Castellon-de-Ampurias was reached we had found that the expanses of water marked on the maps had long since been drained, while the marshes were mere spongy bogs, with just enough green stagnant water to be unwholesome and to harbour a few waterfowl in winter. Some Marsh-Harriers were there, of course, and a Stork seemed to have a nest by some farm-buildings in the distance, while Crested and Short-toed Larks ran along the roads; but nothing of importance was noticed. At Castellon-de-Ampurias there is a fine old church, with a double font of immense size, respecting which the French guide-books are silent; while at Rosas the ruined fort, so stubbornly defended by Lord Cochrane, is worth a visit, and the view, as the road winds upward towards Cadaqués, is superb. As regards birds, there was not much

on the way: Finches were numerous in the few places in the gorges where there was a little water; Pied Flycatchers were frequent among the olive-trees, and Woodchats not uncommon; while now and then a Red-legged Partridge ran or fluttered across the road. At Cadaqués itself we could learn nothing about "the daring cragsmen" spoken of by Don Estanislao Vayreda y Vilá in his 'Fauna Ornitológica de la Provincia de Gerona,' and although the entire juvenile population seemed anxious to meet our wishes, and even to encourage our hopes as fast as they could learn them, their statements did not bear the test of examination. No doubt some Gulls nest in the cliffs, and possibly the two species of Petrel common in the Mediterranean, but no islands were visible which seemed at all suited to either the Eleonora Falcon or Audouin's Gull. And there was nothing particular in the scenery to make Cadaqués worth a visit.

At the fine old city of Gerona the only item of ornithological interest was in our hotel "de los Italianos," where the cook had several Nightingales in separate cages in the *patio*; the best of these songsters having been five years in captivity. On Sunday, May 10th, there was a vast procession to a natural amphitheatre in the hills, among the ruined fortifications above the city. For some time past the heavens had been black with clouds, and next day there was a great rain, which lasted all the way to Barcelona. Nothing need be said about that well-known city, and at Montserrat, where the heat was intense, the only birds of interest were the Black Chat and the Blue Rock-Thrush. We then proceeded due northward to Ripoll, where the Ter, coming down from Camprodon, joins the Fresér, which descends from the steep sides of the Puigmal and the Col de Nuria. Here we stayed several days in hopes of fishing, but the water was very thick and the few fish proved to be "burbot" or grayling, and not trout. The country is mountainous and thickly wooded—beech below and fir above—but very difficult to work; while Ribas, higher up the valley of the Fresér, although very picturesque, is quite unsuited to the larger birds of prey, the mountains being chiefly

rounded and cultivated up to the woods. The whole valley was full of electric-lighted factories, worked by water-power, and, as Feilden remarked, it was a superior Lancashire, without the smoke, and with snowy mountains in the background. Dippers, Sandpipers and Grey Wagtails were frequent along the torrents; the Wheatear, Robin, Redstart, Wren, Hedge-Sparrow and Yellow Hammer were more or less common; the Choughs belonged to the red-billed species, and the only un-English bird was the Meadow-Bunting. By a good road, made since the last Carlist war, we crossed the Sierra de Cadi—the first line of the Pyrenees—by the Col de Tosas (5800 ft.), with fine views of the Puigmal and La Nuria; the chief ornithological features being the Red Rock-Thrush, which was hovering in the way that Mr. Wallis has described, and the Water-Pipit, which became abundant as we ascended. The wind was bitter, and there was evidently snow or rain ready to come down, but we accomplished the slight descent to the frontier town of Puigcerdá (4000 ft.) without a wetting. Built in terraces with gardens and orchards, on the side of a hill above a fertile plain and with mountains all round at convenient distances, Puigcerdá is not only very picturesque, but is also well suited as headquarters for a naturalist, or for a fisherman who does not expect too much; but at this time the three rivers which unite at the bridge of Soler, and which undoubtedly contain trout, were full of snow-water, and no trout would rise to a fly with the prevailing bitter wind. When that dropped or shifted we had rain, sleet or snow, as the case might be. At the foot of the hill and just across the little river Raur, about a mile off, is the small French frontier town or village of Bourg-Madame, whence a high road runs eastward to Mont Louis, while another goes northward just within the French frontier, and crosses the Col de Puymorens to Axles-Thermes. From Puigcerdá we intended to proceed westward, by La Seo de Urgel, into Aragon, but on the night of the 22nd very heavy snow began to fall and continued almost without intermission till Sunday, 24th, when matters began to look a little brighter. Any retreat into Spain was



cut off, for the Col de Tosas was now deep in snow, while progress westward was out of the question, but the carrier of the mail from Bourg-Madame thought he might get us across the Col de Puymorens on horses. In the meanwhile we walked about as much as the weather would allow, on both sides of the frontier; but the birds we saw need not be enumerated here.

On May 25th we started early and drove to the village of Porté, where, in rain and sleet, we took horses; but as we ascended the weather so far improved that an occasional glimpse of the mountain peaks was obtained, and we could at least see some birds. The road was absolutely filled with soft snow to the tops of the cuttings and banks, over 8 feet deep, and even when following the line of the descending streams on either side of the watershed, where the snow was thinnest, the horses sometimes floundered up to their girths. Here the tracks of Ptarmigan and Alpine hare were plentiful; Wheatears and Water-Pipits abounded, and there were several Meadow-Pipits; a Sparrow-Hawk was sitting on the telegraph-wire; some Alpine Choughs passed in the mist, while on the very summit (rather higher than 6200 ft.) Turtle-Doves were migrating, and a Willow-Warbler was crouching in a benumbed condition under the lee of a rock. The last was put into Feilden's hat for protection, and soon announced by its movements that it was recovering animation. Rapidly descending by very rugged paths, we passed the track leading to Andorra on our left, and reached Hospitalet, "a really miserable place," as Mr. Eagle Clarke well remarks, with "the narrow crooked passages which pass for streets ankle-deep in manure, or filth cast from the windows." Nothing speaks better for his ardour than the fact that he and his companion passed several days—and nights—in this squalid hamlet. As we waded from our horses to a little *auberge*—not the *hôtel*, but the house of the postman—the wandering pigs were a good deal in the way, and three ancient ladies who sat on three hillocks—each with a distaff in her hand like a representative of the Paræ—were good enough to call to the swine in a language which

the latter certainly understood and obeyed. Mounting a wooden staircase to the general room, the Willow-Warbler was taken out of Feilden's hat and placed on the window-sill, where we watched it preening its feathers and preparing for flight; when a cat, the presence of which no one had suspected, came with a rush under our arms, and the poor little Warbler was never seen more. After this tragedy, we rattled down to Mérens, and so to Ax-les-Thermes, warmth and civilized life.

At Ax we remained nearly a week, making excursions as well as the unsettled state of the weather permitted, but not a day passed without rain or hail. One walk was up the Oriège (a tributary of the Ariège) to Forge d'Orlu, where a few interesting birds were observed; another was by Mérens to the Lac de Comté, one of a chain of lakes where large trout undoubtedly exist, for they carried away our entire "casts," but we landed none. A little higher up was Ptarmigan-ground, and Grey Partridges were calling below. We had secured the services of a *chasseur* who was also a sort of parish-councillor, a good and truthful man, with one trifling lapse. A heavy storm had swept over the Lac de Comté, and while we were sheltering in a diminutive cabin belonging to a shepherd, the councillor was entertaining the owner—and himself—with a plentiful supply of the wine which we were far too cold to desire. Yet more, our friend had purchased from that shepherd for 2 francs a very old yellow-breasted Marten (*Mustela martes*) which, it was said, had just been dropped by a Golden Eagle; and when we reached Mérens the councillor drank to his bargain in a stiff glass of absinthe. Mounting our carriage and driving rapidly down the road, something was said about Vultures. "Ah, do you take an interest in Vultures?" said the councillor (as if we had not been talking of birds for the last four days): "what a pity I did not know it sooner, for I would have shown you where they nest in any numbers in the great cliff by Mérens, but it is now too late to go back; that must be for another day." We did not go back, for we had now passed that cliff for the third time without seeing a sign of a Vulture; and we

maintained a qualified belief respecting a likely-looking spot which was pointed out, lower down, as the eyrie of the Golden Eagle. But with regard to Capercaillie and other game-birds the councillor, in his calmer moments, knew what he was talking about, and he was a good fisherman, after his kind. Altogether, Ax is by no means a bad place for headquarters.

We visited Tarascon twice, and on the first occasion we observed Swifts (which had not been seen at Ax), and I saw one pair of Alpine Swifts. There, and along the valley of the Ariège, are several interesting caverns, and in one of these Feilden secured fragments of the bones of the cave-bear and of man. From Tarascon we drove to St. Girons, to avoid the wearisome journey by way of Toulouse—passing through fine scenery of the second class, and baiting at the little town of Massat, where there is an excellent old-fashioned inn, superlative cooking, and a grand view of the snowy mass of Mont Vallier in the background. The latter part of the road was along the wooded banks of a river, and rain was falling in torrents. At St. Girons there is a large hotel, frequented by, and only suited to, commercial travellers.

At Luchon I had the pleasure of renewing my acquaintance with the distinguished mountaineer and geologist, M. Maurice Gourdon, who told me, amongst other things, that “according to common report” (and we know what the equivalent of rumour is), the ibex had been almost exterminated in the Valle de Ara (also known as the Val de Arazas) in Aragon, by *English* sportsmen, who had spared neither female nor kid. I felt safe in assuring him that neither the late Sir Victor Brooke nor any of Mr. E. N. Buxton’s party had been guilty of such atrocities. We made excursions to the Lac d’Oo and the Vallée de Lys, subsequently visiting Argelès-Gazost and Gavarnie, and continuing westward to my old quarters at St. Jean-de-Luz; but such well-trodden ground calls for no special remark. The rain, it rained every day. We ascended the Rhune mountain, and, for the first time in my experience, neither a Bearded nor a Griffon Vulture was to be seen there; but this was hardly to

be wondered at, for not even a Vulture's eyes could have pierced the rain-scuds which swept over; driving us to take shelter among the rocks and to make rushes for new positions, as our countrymen did in the assault on the Rhune in November 1813. At the very last, one fine day came for our visit to San Sebastian, where we saw the Blue Rock-Thrush on Monte Orgullo, for the first time in the west; and then, homeward, by way of Bayonne. I may mention that the museum in the Mairie of that city has been destroyed by fire, and in it perished the local specimens of White's Thrush and Pallas's Sand-Grouse which were mentioned in my former paper.

In the following list only those species are set down which were actually identified, and several which we ought to have seen find no place.

**TURDUS VISCIVORUS, L.**

The Mistle-Thrush was generally distributed. Young birds were met with in the beech-woods near Ripoll, Catalonia, on May 18th; while on the road from Tarascon to St. Girons we saw an adult attacking a Magpie, and further on, a bird on its nest.

**TURDUS MUSICUS, L.**

The Song-Thrush was observed on the skirts of the fir-woods above Mérens and at about 5000 feet. It will be remembered that Mr. Eagle Clarke found a nest of this species in the beech-region, lower down—the first authentic record of the breeding of this Thrush in the higher Pyrenees.

**TURDUS MERULA, L.**

The Blackbird was observed in every suitable locality, but it was by no means a conspicuous species.

**TURDUS TORQUATUS, L.**

I saw a pair of Ring-Ouzels well, on June 10th, in the glen between the Little and the Great Rhune, at about 2000 feet elevation, and just the place where one would have expected to find the birds breeding in Scotland or the

north of England. But with the rain-storms prevailing there was little inducement to search for their nest.

MONTICOLA SAXATILIS (L.).

The "Red" Rock-Thrush (as it may be called for distinction) was observed when crossing the Col de Tosas; a fine male hovering for some seconds just below us, and then slowly dropping down into the valley, while later three more were observed. On the French side this species was not seen.

MONTICOLA CYANUS (L.).

We did not meet with the Blue Rock-Thrush on either side of the extreme east of the Pyrenees, though I had often seen it near Amélie-les-Bains in former years; but we saw it well on Montserrat, where its presence might have been expected. It was, however, a great surprise to find this species on the fortress of Monte Orgullo, San Sebastian, for I am unaware of any record of its presence in the western district.

SAXICOLA ŒNANTHE (L.).

The Wheatear was observed from Ripoll upward, and became abundant on the higher ground, especially on the top of the Col de Puymorens. We repeatedly noticed what Mr. H. M. Wallis calls the deep electric blue of the back and head in the male, but careful examination with binoculars convinced us that we had to do with no new species.

SAXICOLA ALBICOLLIS, Vieill.

The Black-eared Wheatear was common on the hillsides between Banyuls and Portboll, and again in the amphitheatre of hills above Gerona; after which it was not observed. *Saxicola stapazina* was not identified anywhere.

SAXICOLA LEUCURA (Gm.).

On this occasion I did not meet with the Black Wheatear in the Eastern Pyrenees; but its dark form was conspicuous among the rocks near the convent of Montserrat.

*PRATINCOLA RUBETRA* (L.).

Early in May Whinchats were always to be seen at Banyuls-sur-Mer, on our walk along the shore to and from the Laboratoire, flitting down to the sea-wrack, or perched on the bushes a few yards inland; we also saw some on the hillsides. In the upper valley of the Ariège, where Mr. Eagle Clarke found it common, we managed to miss it or omitted to note it.

*PRATINCOLA RUBICOLA* (L.).

The Stonechat was observed at Quillan, in the valley of the Aude, and near Prades in the valley of the Tet.

*RUTICILLA PHÆNICURUS* (L.).

Above Ribas, along the valley of the Fresér, we saw several Redstarts on May 20th, and again on the 24th round the great reservoir at Puigcerdá, so the species probably breeds in Catalonia.

*RUTICILLA TITYS* (Scop.).

Though constantly on the look-out for the Black Redstart, it was not until May 21st that we caught a glimpse of an adult male, on the roof of a house at Puigcerdá. Afterwards we found it generally distributed, but by no means so abundant as might have been expected. At Orlu, near Axles-Thermes, a male was paired in the dark grey plumage of the first year; and a female went off her nest in the bone-cavern at Tarascon.

*ERITHACUS RUBECULA* (L.).

In Catalonia we did not meet with the Redbreast until some distance up the valley of the Fresér, above Ribas, and it is chiefly an inhabitant of the higher wooded mountains; we were, in fact, rather surprised to find it so low down as Tarascon, in a narrow lane, leading to the bone-cavern.

*DAULIAS LUSCINIA* (L.).

From Carcassonne upward the Nightingale was everywhere to be heard, up to at least 5000 feet on the Catalonian side; it sat singing on pea-sticks along the road near Ripoll, and seemed to match its voice against the roar of the snow-

fed mountain-streams. Under these conditions the note was often harsh, but the bird was too much in view for there to be any mistake about its identity.

*SYLVIA CINEREA* (Bechst.).

The Whitethroat was generally distributed, from the coast-line up to about 4000 ft. in Catalonia, and 3000 ft. in France.

*SYLVIA CURRUCA* (L.).

The Lesser Whitethroat was thoroughly identified by both of us on the way down from La Rhune on June 10th—the first time for the Basque Provinces.

*SYLVIA ATRICAPILLA* (L.).

Strange to say, we did not see the Blackcap on the Spanish side, nor in the valley of the Ariège, where Mr. Eagle Clarke found it breeding. Our only record is on the road leading to the Vallée du Lys, above Luchon.

*SYLVIA ORPHEA*, Temm.

On the way from Figueras to the Gulf of Rosas we caught a glimpse of the Orphean Warbler, and afterwards I thought I heard its note. It was not seen in France, and, still more strange, *Sylvia melanocephala*, usually conspicuous in the south, was not seen anywhere. Probably the weather made all these Warblers skulk.

*SYLVIA HORTENSIS*, Bechst.

The Garden-Warbler was remarkably abundant at Puigcerdá, especially in the trees round the reservoir.

*REGULUS CRISTATUS*, Koch.

The Golden-crested Wren was seen at Luchon. We never identified the Fire-crest (*R. ignicapillus*), which I had often seen near St. Jean-de-Luz in former years.

*PHYLLOSCOPUS RUFUS* (Bechst.).

The only place where the Chiffchaff was identified was at Puigcerdá.

*PHYLLOSCOPUS TROCHILUS* (L.).

The Willow-Warbler was common round Puigcerdá; the

sad fate of the bird picked up on the Col de Puymorens has already been told.

*PHYLLOSCOPUS BONELLI* (Vieill.).

Identified above Puigcerdá.

*ACROCEPHALUS TURDOIDES* (Meyer).

The Great Sedge-Warbler was seen in the cane-brakes near the Gulf of Rosas. On the west side we saw and heard the bird and found its nest in a little reedy pool at St. Jean-de-Luz, and it breeds in the swamps near Biarritz.

*ACROCEPHALUS PHRAGMITIS* (Bechst.).

The Sedge-Warbler was observed on the banks of the river below Ripoll.

*ACCENTOR MODULARIS* (L.).

As Mr. Eagle Clarke remarks, the Hedge-Sparrow is a mountain species in the Pyrenees. We saw it well above Ribas, in Catalonia; while, as regards the French side, we can endorse his record of its abundance at Hospitalet.

The Alpine Accentor was not seen; we were not high enough for it, or the mist on the Col was too thick.

*CINCLUS AQUATICUS*, Bechst.

In Catalonia the Dipper was plentiful on the Fresér, above Ribas; less abundant on the upper waters of the Ariège valley, above Ax-les-Thermes.

*ACREDULA CAUDATA* (L.).

The Long-tailed Tit was observed in the tall elms near St. Jean-de-Luz.

*PARUS MAJOR*, L.

The Great Tit was seen among the cork-woods on the way to Cadaqués; in the beech-woods above Ripoll; and, on the French side, at Luchon.

*PARUS ATER*, L.

The Coal-Tit was identified only near Ripoll in Catalonia, and near Luchon in France.

*PARUS PALUSTRIS*, L.

The Marsh-Tit appears to be very local. We identified it



among the small cork-woods near Banyuls-sur Mer, and by the stream at Vernet-les-Bains, under Mount Canigou.

On this occasion the Crested Tit was not observed.

*PARUS CÆRULEUS*, L.

The Blue Tit was feeding its young in a pollard willow at Puigcerdá on May 22nd.

*CERTHIA FAMILIARIS*, L.

This inconspicuous species was observed only at Luchon, where it was common.

On this occasion we were unfortunate in failing to see the Wall-Creeper. Our *chasseur* at Ax-les-Thermes said he had received orders from Toulouse to procure the bird, but had not succeeded. It is, however, generally distributed in the Pyrences, and the late Mr. A. C. Chapman obtained a specimen as far west as Burguete, in Navarre.

*TROGLODYTES PARVULUS*, Koch.

The Wren must be widely distributed, but it intruded itself on our notice only in the valley above Ribas.

*MOTACILLA ALBA*, L.

The White Wagtail was seen along the rivers in the valleys of the Aude and the Ariège, as well as at Ripoll, but it does not seem to be plentiful so high up.

*MOTACILLA MELANOPE*, Pallas.

The Grey Wagtail is by far the most numerous member of the genus on both sides of the range. It swarmed along the river towards Orlu, above Ax-les-Thermes, and was abundant on all the streams further west.

*MOTACILLA FLAVA*, L.

The Blue-headed Wagtail was identified at Puigcerdá.

*ANTHUS PRATENSIS* (L.).

Most of the Meadow-Pipits had gone northward, and we saw only a few, on the cold wet Col de Puymorens.

*ANTHUS SPIOLETTA* (L.).

From Ribas upward on the Spanish side, on the top of Puymorens, and down to Ax, the Water-Pipit was very

numerous wherever running water, moist meadows, or boggy ground existed; it was also found on La Rhume, St. Jean-de-Luz, where I had not seen it before.

*ORIOLOUS GALBULA*, L.

At Ax, on May 26th, we saw a pair of Golden Orioles in the trees by the second bend of the road leading to Belcaire, and a nest of the previous year was easily recognizable.

*LANIUS COLLURIO*, L.

The Red-backed Shrike was not met with until St. Jean-de-Luz was reached. There it was abundant: more so than the next species.

*LANIUS POMERANUS*, Sparrm.

The first Woodchat Shrike was noticed near Villefranche, on the road to Vernet, on May 4th; afterwards we saw birds near Cadaqués, at Ripoll, and at Puigcerdá in Catalonia, several near Ax, and a fair number round St. Jean-de-Luz.

*MUSCICAPA GRISOLA*, L.

We certainly saw the Spotted Flycatcher in several places, but Luchon is the only locality for it I find noted.

*MUSCICAPA ATRICAPILLA*, L.

A pair of the Pied Flycatcher were observed on April 30th at Quillau, on the Aude, and many were seen in the small woods between Banyuls and the Spanish frontier, as well as in similar localities on the road to Cadaqués.

*HIRUNDO RUSTICA*, L.

The Swallow swarmed in the lower regions, and was abundant at Puigcerdá on the one side, as well as at Ax on the other. As Mr. Eagle Clarke has remarked, 5000 ft. seems to be about the elevation attained.

*CHELIDON URBICA* (L.).

We found the House-Martin up to the same elevation as the Swallow, but Mr. Eagle Clarke noticed it nesting still higher in Andorra. Passing westward, it was abundant as far as Argelès-Garzost and St. Sauveur, but in the Basque Provinces not one was seen, nor a sign of a nest: a fact

which tallied with my previous experiences. At Tarascon birds were breeding inside some fissures in the bone-cavern, the nests being out of sight. I had already remarked this in the cliffs near Fishguard, in Pembrokeshire, where the mud seems to be deficient in tenacious properties.

*COTILE RUPESTRIS* (Scop.).

The Crag-Martin was common along the Aude on April 30th, and was observed in suitable places between Ribas and Puigcerdá; also at Mérens, above Ax, as already noted by Mr. Eagle Clarke.

*LIGURINUS CHLORIS* (L.).

The Greenfinch was observed at Quillan; we did not notice it at Ax.

*CARDUELIS ELEGANS*, Stephens.

On May 9th Goldfinches were seen on the road to Cadaqués, where a fledgling was brought to us; and the species was abundant at Puigcerdá. On the French side it was fairly common at Ax and Orlu.

*SERINUS HORTULANUS*, Koch.

The Serin Finch was generally distributed.

*CHRYSOMITRIS CITRINELLA* (L.).

The Citril Finch was identified only in the fir-woods above Mérens, on the way to the Lac de Comté.

*PASSER DOMESTICUS* (L.).

I am happy to say that the House-Sparrow was nowhere very numerous at any moderate elevation, and we did not see one at Ax. Further west and lower down this parasite is commoner.

*PASSER MONTANUS* (L.).

The Tree-Sparrow seems to be very local; we identified it near Prades, and again near Puigcerdá.

*FRINGILLA CŒLEBS*, L.

The Chaffinch was generally distributed in France, and observed at Puigcerdá.

*LINOTA CANNABINA* (L.).

The Linnet was common on the French side, and observed from Ribas upward in Catalonia.

*PYRRHULA EUROPEA*, Vieill.

The Bullfinch was only seen at Luchon, where M. Gourdon assured us that it was only too common. I have never seen it in Eastern Spain, but it may well occur in Catalonia. In the Basque Provinces and in Navarre it is by no means rare.

*EMBERIZA MILIARIA*, L.

The Corn-Bunting was noticed in the lower districts on the French side.

*EMBERIZA CITRINELLA*, L.

From Ribas onward to Puigcerdá the Yellow Bunting was abundant, and, on the French side, from Ax downward and westward; the males brilliant in colour.

*EMBERIZA CIRLUS*, L.

A male Cirl Bunting near Prades was the only individual seen, but the species is widely distributed and common in the Basque Provinces.

*EMBERIZA CIA*, L.

The Meadow-Bunting was almost ubiquitous on both sides of the Pyrenees; we thought that the foot of the Cirque de Gavarnie (4300 ft.) was a record elevation, but Mr. Eagle Clarke found this species at 5100 ft. in Andorra.

At this season of the year no Starlings were seen, but we were told that some nested in the dove-cotes round the reservoir at Puigcerdá—a story we did not believe. In winter they are common.

*PYRRHOCORAX GRACULUS* (L.).

Red-billed Choughs were identified at Baños below Ribas, and in France at Pierrefitte (where there is a large colony) and at Gavarnie. They look deceptively large on the wing.

*PYRRHOCORAX ALPINUS*, Koch.

Although well known in the Eastern Pyrenees, the only place where we identified the Yellow-billed Chough was on

the Col de Puymorens; afterwards, at the Lac d'Oo, above Luchon.

*GARRULUS GLANDARIUS* (L.).

The Jay was seen at Montserrat, and was found nesting near Ripoll. It is generally distributed.

*PICA RUSTICA* (Scop.).

In Catalonia the Magpie was noticed at Puigcerdá. On the French side there were nests in the trees on the *Place* at Ax, and there was one just outside Gavarnie. Lower down the species is common enough.

*CORVUS MONEDULA*, L.

Mr. Eagle Clarke identified the Jackdaw at Ussat-les-Bains, below Ax, so we looked out for it and saw it there also. This is the only place in the Pyrenees where I have observed this species, in spite of the watch kept for it in former years.

*CORVUS CORAX*, L.

At Quillan a pair of Ravens were several times observed taking food to their young; at Banyuls another pair were continually going to and from their nest, which probably held young; the species was also seen and heard near Puigcerdá, around Ax, and several times near Luchon. The flight of these Mountain-Ravens is particularly fine and raptorial-like.

*CORVUS CORONE*, L.

Only two Carrion-Crows were identified near Figueras and two at Puigcerdá, so the species is probably scarce in summer.

The Rook was not seen.

*ALAUDA ARVENSIS*, L.

The Skylark was common in the higher part of Catalonia and swarmed at Puigcerdá; at Ax we did not note it.

*ALAUDA ARBOREA*, L.

We saw the Woodlark at Prades and at Puigcerdá; it was rather numerous, frequenting bleak rough hillsides in a way that surprised us.

*ALAUDA CRISTATA.*

The Crested Lark was seen at Prades, and, as might be expected, it was common on the low ground in Catalonia.

*ALAUDA BRACHYDACTYLA*, Leisler.

The Short-toed Lark was noticed between Figueras and Rosas.

*CYPSELUS APUS* (L.).

Swifts were plentiful at Quillan on April 30th; also in Catalonia up to Puigcerdá. We remarked upon their absence at Ax, but lower down the Ariège we saw some at Tarascon, and at less elevations the species was common.

*CYPSELUS MELBA* (L.).

Far above the Common Swifts at Tarascon, I saw a couple of Alpine Swifts for a few moments, and I think it probable that a pair or two nest in the detached clock-tower of Saint Michel, an old building with projecting eaves open below, and just suited to the habits of this bird.

*IYNX TORQUILLA*, L.

Seen at Forges d'Orlu, near Ax, May 27th.

*GECCINUS VIRIDIS* (L.).

The Green Woodpecker was seen at Ax; at Argelès-Gazost it was plentiful.

We did not see the Black Woodpecker, but it is undoubtedly found above Ax. In the Vallée de Lys, above Luchon, we saw many holes in the spruce-firs which could not have been made by any smaller species.

*UPUPA EPOPS*, L.

Seen between Banyuls and Cerbère.

*CUCULUS CANORUS*, L.

Heard and seen near Prades.

*GYPS FULVUS* (Gm.).

On our return to Luchon from the Lac d'Oo, we saw one unmistakable Griffon soaring high in air. It is chiefly in autumn that this Vulture makes its appearance on the French side of the High Pyrenees. Passing westward, the fact that

we did *not* see Griffons on the Rhune or in the neighbouring part of Spain is one of the most remarkable of our experiences.

CIRCUS ÆRUGINOSUS (L.).

Marsh-Harriers were seen over the marshes of Rosas.

CIRCUS CYANEUS (L.).

In the basin of Puigcerdá, but within the French boundary, we distinctly saw a female Hen-Harrier make two or three sharp turns and then drop abruptly into an immense extent of rye. There could be no doubt that she had a nest near, and we took rough cross-bearings with a vague hope that some lawful entry might be found. Eventually we found a track which ought to have led us to within about a hundred yards, and she certainly never rose; moreover, no amount of stoning would make her rise. In Spain we might have walked in, and probably no one would have minded, but in France a *procès-verbal* would probably have been the result. Later, we saw an adult male on some moorland between Ax and Forge d'Orlu.

BUTEO VULGARIS, Leach.

The Buzzard was seen near Puigcerdá; also at Argelès-Gazost and near St. Jean-de-Luz. It is a common species.

ACCIPITER NISUS (L.).

The Sparrow-Hawk was seen at Quillan; also on the Col de Puymorens; and several times near Ax, where a pair had a nest.

MILVUS MIGRANS (Bodd.).

The first Black Kite was seen near Cerbère on our return to Banyuls. We did not see the species again till we reached Bayonne, and at first it came to me as a shock that not a bird was visible from the bridge where I had formerly seen so many. The fact was that the tide was running out, and the Black Kites were lower down the Adour, for in the afternoon there were nine in view at once. On the Spanish side, near San Sebastian and round St. Jean-de-Luz, we saw several. The remarkable thing was the absence of the Red

Kite round St. Jean-de-Luz, where I had formerly seen that bird every day in winter and early spring.

Against the sky-line and the woods, near Luchon, we saw some birds of prey which we could not identify. They were neither Eagles nor Vultures, and I am inclined to think that they may have been Honey-Buzzards, for this species looks very large on the wing.

FALCO PEREGRINUS, Tunstall.

The Peregrine was well seen near Puigcerdá. Again, while waiting for the train at Pierrefitte, above Argelès-Gazost, we had a long view of a bird of this species, and it will be remembered that above Pierrefitte there is a large colony of Choughs, to which the Peregrine is very partial, in default of Pigeons.

FALCO TINNUNCULUS, L.

The Kestrel was generally distributed.

CICONIA ALBA, L.

A Stork was seen near a lonely farmhouse between Figueras and Rosas.

TURTUR COMMUNIS, Selby.

The Turtle-Dove was seen at Prades, Banyuls, Puigcerdá, and on the summit of the Col de Puymorens (6200 ft.).

TETRAO UROGALLUS, L.

The Capercaille is not uncommon in the fir-woods above Ax. In the early morning of May 27th three cock-birds were calling ('chantant'): one rather small, with little tuft, and one much larger, with a fine beard; the third we did not see. Several hens were in attendance.

All the evidence that we were able to collect is that the Black Grouse (*T. tetrix*) does *not* exist, even in the eastern portion of the Pyrenees. There is no local example in the Perpignan Museum.

The Hazel-Grouse (*Bonasa betulina*) is unknown in the eastern half of the Pyrenees, and M. Maurice Gourdon of Luchon told us that in his many years' experience he had only shot one (a hen, which he showed us) and seen another.



The evidence of Ribes, the old guide at the Casino, was to the same effect; and I believe that the species is seldom to be found eastward of Gabas. I saw it once near Roncesvalles, Navarre, some years ago.

LAGOPUS MUTUS (Montin).

The snow on the Col de Puymorens was freely marked by the feet of Ptarmigan, and we were told by the postman of Ribas that birds were often seen on the Col de Tosas in cold weather and in the early morning, but "not when the diligence passed: that was far too late in the day." On the French side the usual name for the Ptarmigan is "Gelinotte," which has led to confusion with enquirers, who have applied that name to the Hazel-Grouse.

PERDIX CINEREA, Latham.

Everywhere the evidence was to the effect that the Grey Partridge is confined to the higher regions, not much below Ptarmigan-ground. We would not sanction shooting this species in the breeding-season, and we did not actually see it, but birds were calling at about 5500 ft. as we descended from the Lac de Comté.

CACCABIS RUFA (L.).

The Red-legged Partridge was flushed among the rugged ground near Banyuls, just above the Raven's nest, and several birds were seen on the road to and from Cadaqués. No confirmation of the reported existence of *C. saxatilis* was obtained.

COTURNIX COMMUNIS, Bonnaterre.

The Quail was heard in the Vallée de Lys and elsewhere, in the vicinity of Luchon.

ÆGIALITIS CURONICA (Gm.).

The Little Ringed Plover was watched on the shingle-beds in the river Soler, near Puigcerdá, where it was evidently breeding.

TRINGOÏDES HYPOLEUCUS (L.).

The Common Sandpiper was noticed on the Fresér river between Ripoll and Ribas; while on the French side it was not uncommon around Ax.

TOTANUS CALIDRIS (L.).

The Redshank was identified along the margins of the *étangs* bordering the Mediterranean.

LARUS CACHINNANS, Pall.

On the *étangs* and the Mediterranean coast.

LARUS FUSCUS, L.

An immature example examined in the flesh at Banyuls.

PUFFINUS YELKOUAN, Acerbi.

At Banyuls an individual of this representative of our Manx Shearwater was handled in the flesh.

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VIII.—*Notes on Birds observed on the Yenisei River, Siberia, in 1895.* By H. LEYBORNE POPHAM.

I LEFT England on March 8th, 1895, with the object of adding something, if possible, to what is known of the birds frequenting the mighty Yenisei River. I was accompanied by Mr. C. Boyce Hill, and by the mate of my yacht (McGarry) as bird-skinner. In spite of a letter from the Russian Embassy in London, our guns were taken away at the frontier, and did not reach Moscow till ten days later. This delay almost proved fatal to our chance of reaching Yeniseisk by sledge, as when we arrived at the end of the railway at Omsk, on March 28th, the snow had almost disappeared. However, after dragging the sledges sometimes through water and sometimes over the bare ground, with at times as many as five horses to each sledge, we eventually, on April 15th, arrived, in the relics of our "pavoskas," at Yeniseisk. Here we were most hospitably entertained by the mayor of the town, Mr. Vostrotine, for seven weeks, waiting for the break-up of the ice and the departure of the first trading steamer down the river. We occupied our time in the purchase and fitting-out of a "lodka," a sort of flat-bottomed house-boat, and in collecting a few specimens of the birds as they arrived from the south. On June 7th we tied our boat on behind a long string of barges, and were